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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL DRODERTIES

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STATE		CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

SITE

Located within the Minot central business area, the U-shaped three-storey Federal Building U.S. Courthouse occupies a 150' X 150' area one block from the central core. Although postal operations were located elsewhere in 1961, the building continues as an active downtown element.

A one-way street, 1st St. S.W., fronts the principal facade on the east which faces the Union National Bank and runs north to the rail yards and the Souris River, approximately 1 1/2 blocks away. Extensive flooding has occurred along the river but it has never reached the Federal Building which was built on a higher elevation. First St. S.W. was formerly Reishus Street, named for a pioneer family which included Torjus Reishus, the first pastor of the First Lutheran Church and Gunder Reishus who was a county official for many years.

To the north is 1st Ave. S.W. and the American Bank and Trust Company of Minot. First Ave. S.W. was formerly Second Street and was changed on April 21, 1914 when the streets were renamed by order of the city council.

Property boundaries on the south face a grocery store and on the west face a parking lot for the Elks Club. The parking lot extends the depth of the block to Broadway which is the main north-south arterial of Minot.

The principal facade is set back 33' from the street and the north facade is set back 23'. Sidewalks 13' wide extend from the curb to grassy areas next to the building. The grassy areas have been landscaped with low shrubbery and contain crushed rock as well.

On the south and west sides, the building is abutted by an asphalt and concrete parking lot and a concrete retaining wall with steel guard rails which define the property lines.

In contrast to surrounding buildings and the Minot area in general, the Federal Building stamps a distinctive government posture by its architectural style and composition.

ORIGINAL BUILDING DIMENSIONS

The original building measures 100° and 67° overall on a foundation which varies in thickness from 1° 7" to 1° 11".

A 67' central projection protrudes 2' the width of the principal facade from the foundation to the parapet while the side facades have 55' projections which protrude 1'.

The rear facade, changed with the 1940 addition, had a 66' central projection which protruded 1' when built.

Form No. 10-300a (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Steps measuring 33' wide mount to the center of the principal facade and 10' 1/2" wide steps abut the north entrance.

Vertical dimensions include a 11' basement, 17' first storey, 13' second storey, and a 12' third storey. A brick stack with metal louvers projects above the roof 2' 5".

FLOOR SPACE

There are 20,200 net occupiable square feet of floor space assigned by the General Services Administration.

OPENINGS

Fenestration is rhythmic though altered. The attached chart reveals sequence by storey and number of openings.

ROOF STYLE

The original building features a built up composition roof (top gravel) and the sides are of asphalt shingle. Roof on the light court is flat and is composition in nature.

ADDITIONS

Completed in 1940, a major addition lengthened the width of the building 39'6" on the basement and first storey elevations. On the second and third storeys the additions recessed in the center leaving two sides, each measuring 31' wide by X 39'6" long. On the west side of the addition a 40'6" recessed loading platform was built into the first storey and has a 10' X 43' marquee anchored in the wall finish above. As part of the addition, a 4'6" X 20' exterior stairwell abutted the rear facade to facilitate a basement entrance.

Also in 1940, interior vestibules were added to the main and side lobby entrances to minimize the inflow of cold air which is a significant factor during North Dakota winters.

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Extensive interior renovation costing \$160,000 occurred in 1962 when the postal operations moved to a new location. The renovation involved conversion of lobby and work areas to office space. Brezina Construction Co. of Minot was the contractor.

More recently a \$357,463 project in 1975 provided a 21' 5" X 9' 5" enclosed fire escape which abuts the west side of the building and extends the full height. The contract also included a hot water heating plant, new plumbing, air conditioning, and provisions for the handicapped. The project was performed by a Minot firm, Benton & Vollbrecht.

Auxiliary structures which have been added to the west facade include an L-shaped 4' wide wooden ramp next to the loading platform and a 10' X 15' concrete pad and cooling tower next to the ramp and the fire escape.

RELATIONSHIP TO ORIGINAL

The overall architectural statement has been retained over the years although changes have occurred primarily in its fenestration. Alterations due to heat conservation and interior changes have resulted in the infill of the round arched panes and mullion in the first storey elevation. The infill is similar to the stone infill on the third window on the side facades which was incorporated into the original building design. One departure from the infill has been the rounded fan light arch over the north entrance which remains undisturbed.

Windows have been replaced with dark metal framed combination storm and screen windows although the sash, pane, and mullion were replicated from the original wooden windows. On the recessed center of the rear facade, the three tall, round arched windows which spanned the second and third storeys have been infilled, inside existing brick surrounds.

A major addition in 1940 substantially increased the building's massing and the design harmoniously continued the scale and proportion. Moreover, the winged design of the rear extension reflected the design associated with Post Office and Federal buildings constructed around the turn of the century.

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Corresponding materials were used in the addition and jointing was accomplished smoothly, but weathering and a slight color differentiation produced a vertically discordant area on the two side facades.

A brick enclosed fire escape attached to the south facade was added in accordance with fire regulations. Texture and color are compatible to the building and the south end terminals cease at the centers of the first vertical window alignment. As a result, visible portions of the window openings have been infilled with mortar.

The ramp with a wooden railing on the south facade provides access for the handicapped and together with the fire escape present necessary alterations accomplished on the side of the building that is the least visible from the street.

Fenestration changes previously described constitute the major alterations to the principal facade along with the conversion of the main entry companion doors into windows. The conversion was sympathetically accomplished, including the balustered aprons, and is congruous with the remaining windows of the elevation. The main doorway has been altered to accommodate replacement by an aluminum framed glass double door with fixed transom beneath the rounded arch. Previously, the arch contained a fan light but it has since been blocked in and matches the remaining openings.

One other alteration occurred on the principal and side facades and it involved removal of the bracketed wrought iron wall lamps. The exposed wiring junctions were covered by metal plates painted in a compatible color.

Except for the window replacements, the second and third storeys remain as constructed.

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MATERIALS (Exterior)

Rising from a concrete foundation on spread footings, a skeletal steel framework provides the building's basic structural component. Concrete is also used on the basement floors, sidewalks, and entrance steps cheeks.

Smooth limestone is evident from the visible portion of the basement to the string course at the base of the second storey and on the pilasters, decorative reliefs, keystones, architrave, central frieze projection, dentils, cornice, and parapet coping.

Granite is used in the entrance steps and in the sidewalks and street curbing on the north and east sides.

Brick is most noticeable on the second and third storeys, on the frieze, and on the parapet.

Metal framing is seen in the windows and doors plus metal lettering is used in the building identification.

FACADE ANALYSIS

The architectural statement presented by the symmetrically-arranged principal facade of the U-shaped, three-storey Federal Building U.S. Courthouse expresses an austere stateliness in its centrally projected massing which can be most closely associated with the Italian Renaissance Revival style. Consistent with this style, texture changes occur in the horizontal movements at successive elevations to highlight each zone.

Seven bays, precisely aligned, characterize the principal facade which rises from a large-paneled limestone foundation. In the basement elevation are four rectangular window openings, the left two of which are infilled. Also in this zone is the cornerstone on the right corner and has incised lettering in the stone which reads: WILLIAM G. MC ADOO SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY OSCAR WENDEROTH SUPERVISING ARCHITECT 1914. Emphasizing the broad profile of the lower zone, elongated steps mount to the first storey in scale with the larger elements of the elevation.

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Beyond the water table at the introduction of the first storey is broad limestone paneling, girdling all facades and containing balusters set in aprons beneath each window opening.

Graduated reduction in wall element composition emerges in the first storey elevation and is manifested by the rusticated banding of the course cut limestone wall finish. Stepped arching accommodates the round-arched bays containing entrance and window openings and provides a departure in articulation from the angular presentation as a whole. The center main entrance in this elevation is comprised of aluminum framed glass double doors with fixed transom under the infilled round arches. Complimentary to this entry are the round-arched window openings which contain double sash flanked by mullion and side sash.

Building identification appears over the main entry in metal lettering which reads: FEDERAL BUILDING UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE.

A projected string course occurs above the first storey elevation and accentuates the contrast of the brick finish on the second and third storeys. Further contrasts result from the five fluted pilasters which frame the central projection and span the upper two storeys. Within the central projection the 12 over 12 light double-sash second storey windows display enrichments above and below, achieving a focal balance to the facade. These enrichments consist of aprons and cornices supported by consoles. The upper aprons contain decorative reliefs including triglyphs and metopes. End windows continue the fenestration pattern and feature flat arched brick voussoirs centered with limestone keystones.

Between the second and third storey windows are decorative panels in limestone featuring double swag reliefs. These panels are horizontally and vertically aligned and contribute limited ornamentation on all facades.

Presenting the final zone is a stone banded architrave with a wide brick frieze except for the central projection which bears decorative reliefs in the form of triglyphs and pateras in limestone. Above the frieze are limestone dentils, fascia, cornice, and the surmounting plain brick parapet capped with limestone coping.

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Other facades continue the primary theme set forth in the principal facade with slight variations. The seven-bay north facade displays the continuation more definitively than does the six-bay south facade due to the necessary alterations. However, the north facade fenestration was originally designed with a departure in the third window of the first storey elevation. Smaller and rectangular, the 4 over 4 light sash window is set in the same size round arched openings as the others but was designed to have the round arches infilled with stone compatibly designed. On the south a brick projection which accommodates an enclosed fire escape extends from the basement to the architrave at the center of the first vertical window alignment, and a 10' X 40' recessed loading platform is located at the rear of the facade. A marquee anchored by five rods in the wall finish projects over the loading area.

The six-bay, U-shaped rear facade has been described in RELATIONSHIP TO ORIGINAL and in general corresponds to the other facades. The transoms above the first storey center windows contain metal louvers. In the center set back between the second and third storeys, the round-arched window openings display radiating brick voussoirs converging to limestone keystones and remain although the openings have been infilled for heat conservation.

MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA

FEDERAL BUILDING U.S. COURTHOUSE WINDOW OPENINGS AND ENTRANCES

WIND			OPENINGS	ENTRAN	CES
FACADE	STOREY	ORIGINAL	PRESENT	ORIGINAL	PRESENT
Principal (East) lst St. S.W.	Basement First Second Third	4 4 7 7	2 6 Same Same	- 3 -	- 1 -
North (1st Ave.S.W.)	Basement First Second Third	2 3 4 4	0 6 7 7	- 1 - -	Same
South	Basement First Second Third	ц 3 4 4	1 2 7 7	1 - -	3 -
Rear (West)	Basement First Second Third	6 7 7 7	4 6 4 4	1 - -	1 - -

A small dormer window is located in the middle of the attic under the built-up roof and is visible only on the rear facade.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

SPECIFIC DA	TES 1915-Original 1940-Addition	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT 1915-Oscar Wend 1940-Louis A. S	eroth imon
1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 X _1900-	AGRICULTUREARCHITECTUREARTCOMMERCECOMMUNICATIONS	ECONOMICSEDUCATIONENGINEERINGEXPLORATION/SETTLEMENTINDUSTRYINVENTION	LITERATURE MILITARY MUSIC PHILOSOPHY XPOLITICS/GOVERNMENT	SCULPTURESOCIAL/HUMANITARIANTHEATERTRANSPORTATIONOTHER (SPECIEV)
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSÇAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNIFICANCE

Conspicuous to the Minot, North Dakota central business area is the 64 year old Italian Renaissance Revival style Federal Building U.S. Courthouse. Its historical landmark status is assumed by Minot citizens and is one of few downtown buildings continuing in one of its original functions.

Contributory to the prime importance is the fact that the site derives from the original Minot townsite patent #85, August 23, 1888, from President Grover Cleveland. The patent was granted to Solomon G. Comstock, President of the Northwest Land Company, who was also an agent for James J. Hill, the Northwest pioneer railroad builder. Common to the times was the practice of railroad and townsite companies aligning to attract immigrant settlers to sites compatible to the railroad development. Such was the case with the predominately Norwegian immigrants who chose to settle in Minot. I

Between the time the townsite patent was granted and the Federal Building was completed in 1915, a Mr. T. P. Kulaas, pioneer lumber merchant, had acquired five of the six lots comprising the building site. Evidence suggests Mr. Kulaas did not want to sell the lots to the U.S. Government and contributed to the 10 year delay after Senator J. C. Hansbrough had introduced a bill in Congress for construction of the building. ² However, upon the death of Mr. Kulaas in 1910, the Government brought forth a condemnation action which was decreed on August 3, 1911 and provided \$9,800 to the fee owners.

Designed by the U.S. Treasury Supervisory Architect, Oscar Wenderoth, the original drawings were completed November 8, 1913 and the contract was awarded on March 28, 1914 to John Lauritzen of Fergus Falls, Minnesota. ³ Contract bid was \$124,650. Superintendent of construction for the project was Joseph C. Johnson whose "firm hand and eagle eye" guided it to completion. ⁴ Minot citizens were intensely proud of their new federal structure which was considered to be one of the finest in the Northwest and joyously participated in its midnight opening on June 12, 1915. ⁵

Main original occupants were the U.S. Post Office and the U.S. District Court. The latter continues to function as one of four federal courtrooms in North Dakota and is included in the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

9	MIVIOR DIDITION				
٦.	Original microfilme	d drawings and co	nstruction pho	tographs locate	d at GSA,
_	Operational Plannin	g - PBS Archives,	Denver Federa	1 Center, Denye	r, CO.
2.	Interview with Atto	rney Jon Kerian, I	President, Nor	th Dakota Bar A	ssociation,
3.	Minot, North Dakota	, July 31, 19/9. Pobort Cory Colu	nnict Minat D	od Tre Norvo - Million	t Nouth Delete
٥.	Interview with Mr. August 2, 1979.	kobert cory, colu	mist, Minot	any wraterno	t, North Dakota,
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Postmasters who served in this building include: E. H. Stenvick, Fred L. Anderson, Burt E. Stewart, Nellie Daugherty, Leo E. Tibbs, and W. H. Dunnell. In December 1961 the Post Office vacated the building and moved to a location on the fringe of the central business area. ⁶ Since September 20, 1968, Mr. John P. Severson has been the Minot Postmaster.

There have been eight Federal District Judges and each have figured in North Dakota history. Judge Charles F. Amidon who signed the condemnation action in acquiring the building site was noted as one of the great civil libertarian judges of his time. Born in Clymer, New York on August 17, 1856, Judge Amidon was appointed by President Grover Cleveland in 1896 and served until his retirement and death on December 26, 1937. A strong supporter of citizenship, Judge Amidon allowed few exemptions from jury duty participation. His most famous cases included U.S. v. Allen (179 Fed. 13) in which Oklahoma Indians were able to retain their lands and cases involving violations of the Espionage Act in 1917. Although besieged by attacks of unpatriotism, Judge Amidon cooly prevailed on the side of civil liberties to guarantee First Amdendment rights. 7

Other judges who have served the court include: Alfred D. Thomas, Ronald N. Davies, Paul Benson, Andrew Miller, Charles J. Vogel, George S. Register, and Bruce M. Van Sickle. Of Judge Register who was appointed by President Dwight Eisenhower on July 27, 1955, a citation of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals (317 F. 2nd 264-265) praised his jurist abilities in regard to the handling of Butler v. U.S. (317 F. 2nd 249), a mail fraud case. The present judge, Bruce M. Van Sickle, born in Minot on February 13, 1917, was appointed by President Richard Nixon on January 18, 1972, and is the only judge who has had his chambers in Minot.

By the 1930's it became obvious that additional space was needed and a major rear additon was completed in late 1940. Specializing in government construction work, the MacDonald Construction Company of St. Louis, Missouri was awarded a \$149,293 contract with Louis Boos serving as Construction Superintendent. Construction Engineer for the U.S. Treasury Department was Walter J. Mark. ⁸ The addition was designed by the Public Works Branch Supervisory Architect Louis A. Simon.

Minot federal court actions continue to contribute to area development as the scene of actions including tax and bankruptcy cases as well as hundreds of naturalization cases over the past decade. Many of the latter result from nearby Minot Air Force Base personnel who marry overseas and return with dependent foreign spouses.

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Throughout the six decades since its erection, the Minot Federal Building has unobtrusively provided a federal presence and is the only government-owned federal building in the Minot area. Taken for granted as a historical landmark, citizens fondly refer to its "just being there" and recall its association in their daily lives. 9

- 1. Briggs, Harold E. "The Great Dakota Boom", North Dakota Historical Quarterly, Vol 4, No. 2, p. 106.
- 2. "Minot's Beautiful Post Office Building Opened Tonight," Minot Daily Optic Reporter, June 12, 1915, p. 1.
- 3. "Contract Let Today for the Construction of New Minot Federal Building This Spring," Minot Daily Reporter, Mar 28, 1914, p 1.
- 4. "Minot's Beautiful Post Office ", p. 1.
- 5. Ibid.
- 6. "Post Office Dedication Speaker Has Varied Background of Public Service", Minot Daily News, June 17, 1962, n.p.
- 7. Ratliff, Beaulah Amidon, "Charles Fremont Amidon," North Dakota Historical Quarterly, Vol 8, No. 2, pp. 83 95.
- 8. "To Start Work At Post Office", Minot Daily News, September 13, 1939, p. 1.
- 9. Random solicitation from Minot, ND citizens, July 30 August 3, 1979.

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4. "Reishuses in Valley Since 1886", Minot Daily News, August 19, 1961, Part 2, Section D, p. 2.